

free. Next month, I will convene an important hearing of the Judiciary Committee on the Founding Fathers Project and the effort to make the historical writings of our Nation's Founders more accessible and open to the public.

I will also work to ensure Senate passage of the Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007, S. 886 to reverse a troubling Bush administration policy to curtail the disclosure of Presidential records. And I will continue my fight to ensure the public's right to know by urging the prompt consideration and passage of meaningful press shield legislation in the Senate.

More than two centuries ago, Patrick Henry proclaimed that "[t]he liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them." I could not agree more. Open government is not a Democratic value, nor a Republican value. It is an American value and an American virtue. In this new year, at this new and historic time for our Nation, I urge all Members to join me in supporting an agenda of an open and transparent Government on behalf of all Americans.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last night, due to airline flight delays in South Dakota and Minneapolis, I missed the rollcall vote on H.R. 4986, the amended version of the Department of Defense authorization bill. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted "yes"—similar to my vote in December when the Senate initially passed H.R. 1585, the conference report to the Department of Defense authorization bill.

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of legislation introduced this week to extend unemployment benefits temporarily as a means of stimulus. Like many of my colleagues I certainly have a list of ideas for best stimulating our struggling economy. But unemployment insurance certainly needs to be a part of the picture. I would like to thank Senator KENNEDY for so quickly introducing this bill to extend current unemployment benefits by at least 20 weeks, and by an additional 13 weeks in States experiencing especially high unemployment rates.

There are two key principles this legislation addresses. First, we need to make sure that we are prudently spending money in a way that encourages an increase in actual economic activity. Second, we need to help the people who are most hurt during difficult times. We need a combination of prudent fiscal policy and human compassion.

So first, it is just plain good sense to target people who are unemployed. They are going to spend this money

immediately on food and clothing, and this money will very quickly churn in the local economy. But equally importantly, the goal of stimulating the economy should be one of improving the quality of life for Americans. The people who are in the greatest need of help, directly hurt by economic decline, are those who have lost their jobs. It only makes sense that we make their needs a priority.

I think that this period of economic difficulty also highlights the need to pass the broader unemployment reform efforts that Senator KENNEDY is spearheading. While this stimulus measure will help many people who are unemployed, we need to cover part-time workers who have lost their jobs, and make sure we are counting all recent periods of work toward unemployment eligibility and levels.

Extending unemployment benefits is regularly employed to stimulate a flagging economy, and these payments have been proven to quickly add demand to the economy. I hope that we are all in agreement that this is an essential component of any stimulus package.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING GANNESTON CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a small business from Maine's capital city that will be honored this coming Friday for earning the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce's President's Award for its outstanding contributions to the quality of life in the greater Augusta area. Ganneston Construction Corporation, a woman-owned construction business that works in both the public and private spheres, is known for its sparkling and dependable structures.

Founded early in the 1960s as a builder of solely residential units, Ganneston Construction subsequently moved into commercial construction and has continued to expand into other markets since. Presently a full-service general contractor, construction manager, and design builder, Ganneston has taken on projects of varying sizes throughout Maine, and each job is performed in a timely manner with painstaking sensitivity to that particular building's unique requirements. The firm has restored landmarks like the Lewiston Library, made renovations to the well-known Senator Inn in Augusta, and provided the Maine Veteran's Home and Down East Community Hospital in Machias with a new facility. Ganneston has completed roughly 100 projects so far this decade, with examples of its work on display in cities and towns across Maine. Because the company's 45 employees consistently produce buildings of remarkable quality, annual sales have grown from \$6 million in 2001 to \$15 million in 2007.

While Ganneston is to be commended for its dedication to building safe and

secure structures, the community service its employees perform is what makes Ganneston so deserving of acknowledgment. Setting an inspirational example is Stacey Morrison, chief executive officer and owner of Ganneston Construction. In addition to managing the company's day-to-day operations, Mrs. Morrison makes time to serve the local area in multiple ways. She is a member of the board of Women Unlimited, a praiseworthy Maine organization that supplies women, minority, and displaced workers with the tools, training, and consistent support needed to be successful in the technical, trade, and transportation industries. Similarly, Mrs. Morrison volunteers for the Kennebec Valley United Way and was recently elected chairwoman of the chapter for 2008. Ganneston's employees have emulated Mrs. Morrison's compassion and leadership and have donated countless hours and dollars to service organizations throughout central Maine.

Ganneston Construction's record of success and service is stellar. On the one hand, Ganneston has never failed to complete a contract and continues to see its workload rise as a result of its first-rate performance. Whether constructing for the Air National Guard or the University of Maine, for shopping centers or apartment complexes, Ganneston maintains a commitment to solid craftsmanship that has helped the company earn its prestigious reputation. On the other hand, the company's officers and employees donate significant time and resources to help those in need, making good on Ganneston's value statement "to give back to the community in which we live." I thank Stacey Morrison and everyone at Ganneston Construction for their hard work and determined generosity, and congratulate them on their recognition.●

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT O. ANDERSON

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, Robert O. Anderson was not a citizen just of New Mexico, but I think it can be fairly said that he was one of those people for whom the term "citizen of the world" was intended.

He died in December at age 90, and his memory was honored at this past weekend services in Roswell, NM. Our State has been his home for decades. Those of us who knew him were reminded each time we talked with him how wide-ranging his interests were, and how progressive and determined a man he was. It was his leadership and willingness to take a risk that led to the discovery of oil on the North Slope of Alaska, and the pipeline that followed 7 years later.

He was a giant in the oil industry, in ranching, in business, in publishing, in politics and in environmental circles. A thoughtful and perceptive man—he warned of global warming years ago—he was a patron of the arts and of institutions devoted to study and research,